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The U.S. House of Representatives voted to block an automatic pay raise of \$1,600 for next year with the support of all four members of Burlington County's congressional delegation.

Congressmen Robert Andrews, D-1st of Haddon Heights, Frank LoBiondo, R-2nd of Mays Landing, John Adler, D-3rd of Cherry Hill and Chris Smith, R-4th of Robbinsville, were among the 402 "yea" votes that approved the pay freeze measure, which was similar to one that was unanimously approved by the Senate last week.

It was the second consecutive year that Congress voted to forego raises, also known as "cost of living increases." The raises are calculated using a formula based on private sector wages and salaries. Most years the hikes have been between 2.5 and 3.5 percent, and federal law requires Congress to vote against getting the raise or it takes effect automatically.
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The base salary for members of the House and Senate is currently \$174,000. Adler, who also voted against a pay hike last year, said it would be wrong for lawmakers to accept a pay raise while the country is still struggling to rebound from an economic recession.

"As families and small businesses tighten their belts, so should Congress," Adler said in a press statement. "It's about time Washington recognizes the sacrifices our seniors and families are making during these difficult times."
LoBiondo said he has consistently voted against pay raises during his tenure in the House and has returned a total of \$39,496 in additional compensation from years when the automatic pay raise was not prevented.

"I have long said automatic increases for members of Congress exemplify everything wrong with Washington," LoBiondo said in a statement. "(Tuesday's) action is the right policy and the right message to reaffirm to the American people that Congress understands the economic realities they are living."

Members of the House are up for re-election this fall.